

## TOWN COUNCIL

### STAFF REPORT Police Department



<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	April 9, 2024
<b>PROJECT:</b>	Consideration to Amend Towing Ordinance, Second and Final Reading
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Joe Babkiewicz, Chief of Police

**REQUEST:** Consideration of an Ordinance to amend Chapter 26 – Traffic and Motor Vehicles, Article VII – Towing and Wrecker Services, Second and Final Reading.

**ACTIONS FROM FIRST READING:** At the March 12<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting, Mayor, and Town Council approved amendments to the Town’s Towing Ordinance with the following changes:

1. It was recommended that Under Section 26-173.G. Personnel and Operators – the requirement for adequate background checks on drivers be changed or removed.

***Action:*** Section 26-173.G has been removed from the Ordinance.

2. It was recommended that Tow Companies provide a secondary form of payment.

***Action:*** Section 26-174.B. Holding and Releasing of Vehicles states, “Towing Companies must accept forms of payment other than cash at the point of transaction.” No additional action is required.

3. It was suggested that some of the rates were too high.

***Action:*** The following fees from Section 26-177.A. Schedule of Fees for Rotation List Services – have been lowered.

- Tows Exceeding One Hour from \$200 to \$125; and,
- Gate Fee for Customer-Requested Pick Up After Normal Business Hours from \$75 to \$50.

**BACKGROUND:** The Police Department and Town staff made recommended updates to the above-named ordinance from the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances. The primary change was to update the rate schedule to bring the types of fees and the rates charged more in line with neighboring jurisdictions. This primary recommended change would reduce tow company billing errors, improve cost reasonableness, and establish better consistency in customer expectations.

Two additional changes were also suggested: The process for tow companies to submit new or revised qualification packages was updated, and clarifications to the required insurance coverages and evidence of vehicle ownership were suggested.

**CURRENT FEE SCHEDULE V. RECOMMENDED FEE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Current Fee Schedule</b>	<b>Current Fee</b>
Pick Up Town of Bluffton	\$75
Pick Up Disabled Vehicles	\$125
Pick Up Police Request (8am - 10pm)	\$100
Pick Up Police Request (10pm - 8am)	\$200
Police Impound Request	\$125
Storage Per Day After First 24 Hours	\$25

<b>Recommended Fee Schedule</b>	<b>Proposed Fee</b>
Request for Tow - Town of Bluffton Vehicles	\$75
Law Enforcement Requested Tow	\$200
Law Enforcement Requested Tow with Collision	\$300
Tow Exceeding One Hour	\$125 per additional hour
Storage Per Day After First 24 Hours	\$40
Gate Fee for Customer-Requested Pick Up After Normal Business Hours	\$50
Administrative Fee for Title Notification	\$300

**NEXT STEPS:** Town Council has the authority to take the following action on Second and Final Reading of the proposed ordinance amendment:

1. Approve the Ordinance as submitted;
2. Approve the Ordinance with modifications;
3. Deny the Ordinance as submitted.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Ordinance
2. Ordinance Exhibit A
3. Recommended Motion